

U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



RELEASE #2007-12-20-03

Dec. 20, 2007

U.S. ARMY EUROPE HONORS ITS TOP FOOD SERVICE PERSONNEL AT ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

By Pfc. Michael Syner

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- George Orwell once said, "We may find in the long run that tinned food is deadlier than the machine gun." This fear was common in the early 1900s, and it was well-justified. Some claim more people died in the Spanish-American War from poor food standards than bullets. It is common knowledge in today's society that healthy food is fuel for the human body, but how does the Army ensure that Soldiers are getting high-quality food?



PFC MICHAEL SYNER

Winners of the U.S. Army Europe Food Service Soldier of the Year, Food Service NCO of the Year and Philip A. Connelly Awards for Excellence in Army Food Service pose for a group photo following the awards presentation ceremony in Heidelberg, Germany Dec. 13.

Army food service personnel are subject to continual inspection and high standards, but the Army has also learned that fueling competition between Soldiers is an effective way to push food quality and

standards even higher. The Philip A. Connelly Award for Excellence in Army Food Service and Food Service NCO of the Year and Food Service

Soldier of the Year competitions are the Army's way of rewarding Soldiers and civilian employees who maintain exceptional standards for food sanitation, preparation, taste, nutrition, and service. U.S. Army Europe officials presented its level of those honors at the 40th annual food service awards ceremony here Dec. 13. Winners at the USAREUR level go on to compete at Army level.

During the ceremony USAREUR honored its Food Service Soldier of the Year and Food Service NCO of the Year, who both assigned to the same unit: Staff Sgt. Jermaine Jones and Spc. Melissa Woods of the 212th Combat Support Hospital in Miesau, Germany.

The Connelly awards program, established in 1968, recognizes large and small garrison dining facilities as well as unit field kitchens, said Staff Sgt. Jacqueline D. Hodge of the 29th Support Group, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, whose unit won the Connelly award in the field kitchen category.

Other Connelly winners included the Soldiers and civilian employees of the Command Sgt. Major Lawrence T. Hickey Dining Facility at Camp Normandy, Germany, representing U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr, who earned honors in the large garrison dining facility category. The combined team from the 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group and the 554th Military Police Company at Panzer Kaserne, Germany, representing USAG Stuttgart, was the small garrison dining facility winner.

“We started practicing every Thursday preparing a meal as a team since May to prepare for the USAREUR-level Connelly,” said Sgt. 1st Class Scott T. Shimon of the winning USAG Stuttgart team. “Now all we have to do is keep up the momentum to get the (Army-level) award.”

The Connelly awards program examines food handling and preparation skills and evaluates how well competitors are meeting safe food standards and providing healthy enjoyable meals for Soldiers. Evaluation committees visit each competitor while they are working to observe and grade them. Judging for the 2008 USAREUR level awards spanned from October 2006 to March 2007. Judging for the Army-level awards will be conducted in 2008.



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